

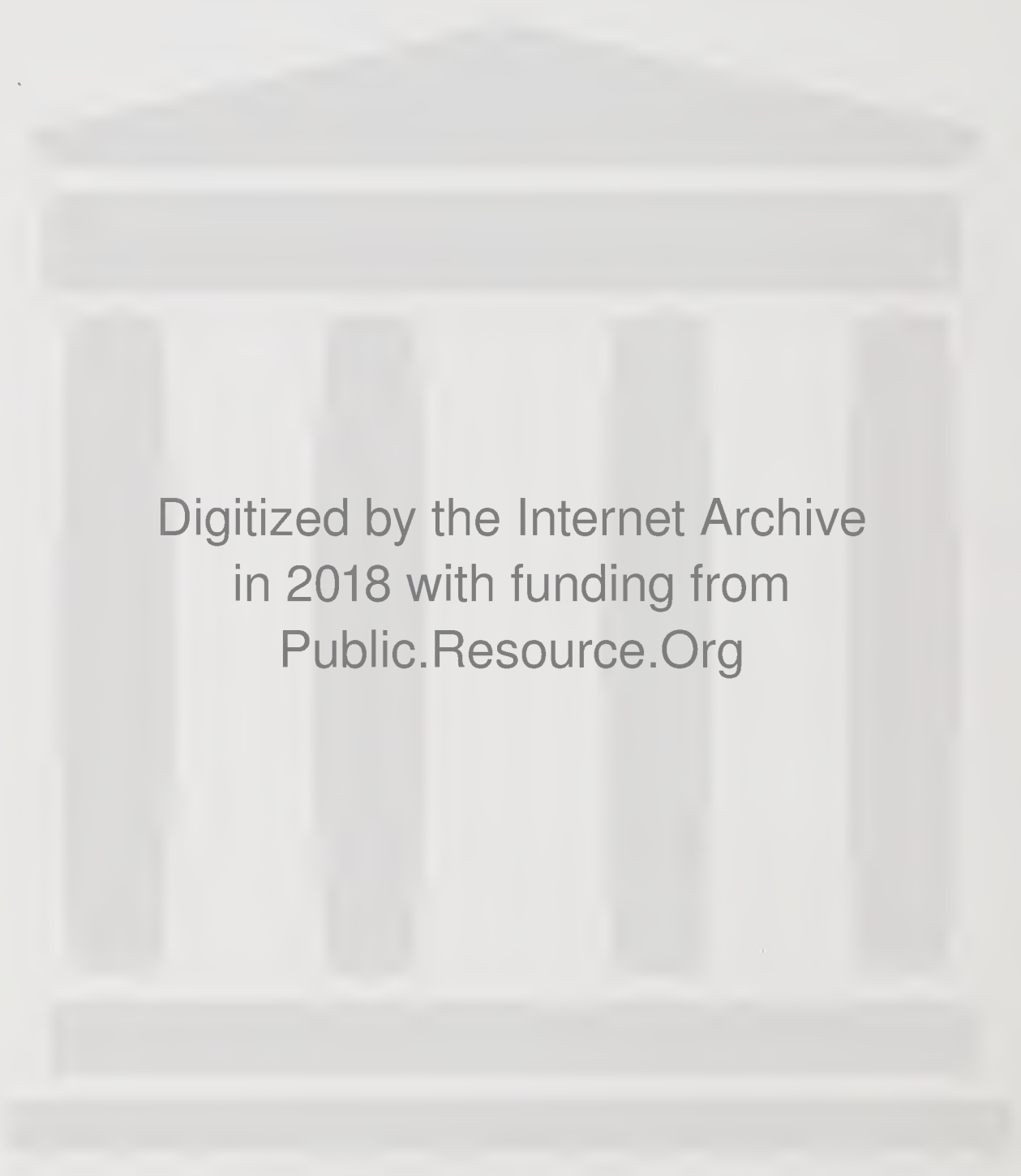
# GLIMPSES OF AGRA MONUMENTS



*Itimad-ud-Daula*



Agra Circle  
Archaeological Survey of India  
22, The Mall, Agra



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The Archaeological Survey of India was established in 1861 with Sir Alexander Cunningham as its Surveyor to preserve, explore, decipher and reveal ancient glory and the rich past of our national heritage. Ever since its establishment, this organisation has intensively remained engaged in carrying out research work in various fields of archaeology viz. prehistory, protohistory, historical archaeology, art, architecture, epigraphy, numismatics, exploration, excavation, structural conservation, chemical preservation, establishment of site museums, regulations and control of antiquities and horticultural operations for beautification of ambience of ancient monuments all over the country.

At present, the Survey has been managing the nation's heritage through a number of Circles, Min. Circles, Excavation branches, more than 33 Archaeological Site Museums, Chemical Branch and Horticulture Division located in almost all states of India. With the help of two Acts viz. Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites And Remains Act 1958, and Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972, and Rules framed there under, ASI regulates its various activities.

The Agra Circle is one of the oldest circles of the ASI. Previously known as Northern Circle it was established in the year 1885, with its headquarters at 22, The Mall, Agra. Eminent personalities like R. Froude Tucker, M. Muhammad Shuaib, Gordon Sanderson, H. Hargreaves, J. F. Blackiston, J. A. Page, Maulavi Zafar Hassan, M. S. Vats, K. N. Puri, B. B. Lal, S. C. Chandra, S. R. Rao, N. R. Banerjee, Y. D. Sharma, D. R. Patil, W. H. Siddiqui and other scholars have headed the Circle.

At present the administrative jurisdiction of Agra Circle covers 23 districts of western Uttar Pradesh. Agra Circle looks after 395 monuments and sites including



those of three World Heritage Monuments viz. Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri, all of the Mughal period and in Agra District which are widely known. There are many other monuments of historical and archaeological importance in Agra, but less known to the public. This booklet provides an overall view of some of these monuments.

### **Akbar's tomb, Sikandara**

The mausoleum of the Mughal emperor Akbar (1556-1605 A. D) stands in the centre of a sprawling garden laid in *Charbagh* plan. It is square on plan and rises to five storeys which is receding gently to give

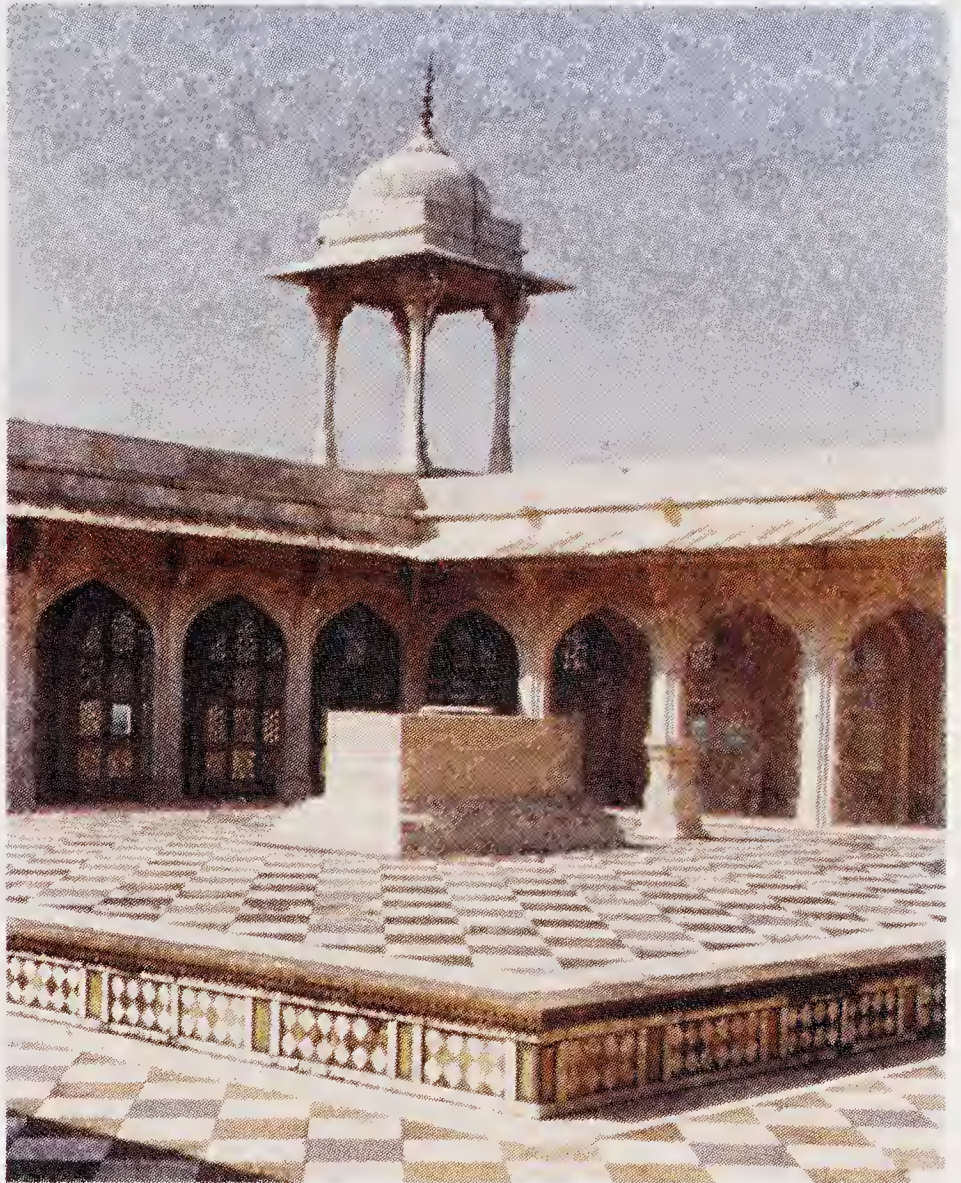


pyramid like impression. The first storey was built by Akbar during his life time while the upper storeys were perhaps added immediately after him. The ground

floor has spacious cloisters on all sides except in the middle of the south side. The centre of the southern side is occupied by a vestibule which is richly embellished with Quranic verses in gold over vibrant deep blue background. An inclined and descending passage leads from this vestibule to contrastingly simple and starkly plain walled cenotaph chamber encompassing a solitary grave of Akbar which is made of brick and lime mortar. The entire tomb except the top storey is constructed of red sand stone, while the top storey is built of white marble. The square storeys have arcaded verandahs with arcades and cluster of kiosks on each side. Some of the kiosks in the second storey have pyramidal marble roofs while others are crowned by cupolas. The third and



fourth storeys have an identical arrangement of arches, supported on pillars and *chhatris* attached exteriorly to each facade. The top storey has a square court which is open to sky. The central courtyard is enclosed on all sides by slender arches and piers into bays which have trabeate ceiling. At the centre of the courtyard, lies a square platform over which a white marble cenotaph is laid out. This cenotaph is profusely carved with arabesque and floral pattern. This monument architecturally deviates from the conventional Muslim tomb architecture due to the absence of dome from its architectural scheme, an essential element of the sepulchral architecture under Islamic tenets and commissions of numerous marble *chhatris* (cupolas) above the kiosks.



The lush sunken garden has been divided into four equal quarters on the conventional *Charbagh* plan, each quarter separated by a raised path with a shallow channel running in its centre. The garden is enclosed by tall battlement walls pierced only from the south through a majestic gateway. On the other sides, the enclosure wall is decorated with false gates to maintain the symmetry.

The northern gateway is now practically ruined. The east and west gateways are almost identical in plan. They are seven storeyed structure with a complex of



rooms of various shapes, interconnected by diagonal and rectangular corridors. At their centre are a huge recessed porch (*iwan*) covered by a half dome and flanked on either side by two small arched alcoves one over the other surmounted by beautiful *chhatris* (kiosk). The miniature *chhatris* surmounted on the pilasters have been attached to the quoins of the facade. Both the gateways are decorated exquisitely with painting and stucco, inlay and mosaic and beautiful carving works depicting elephants, peacocks, goose and other birds, lotus and other floral and conventional pattern.

The southern gateway forming the main entrance is rectangular and two storeyed. It has three bays and two storeys of deep alcoves on the east and west façades, while



the north and south facades are identical, each having a colossal *iwan* (portal) in the centre and two arched alcoves one over the other on the sides. The central portion rises well over the terrace and has two *chhatris*.

The whole exterior has exquisite mosaic and inlay work in coloured stones. The central arched entrance has carved with Persian inscriptions. The important feature of the gateway is the introduction of four graceful marble minarets raised from the corners of the terrace.

There is another beautiful monument known as Kanch Mahal located to the south east corner of Akbar's tomb. The three storeyed structure built in brick, lime mortar and red sand stone is said to been constructed by Jahangir. The northern façade of the structure is divided into numerous panels decorated with various motifs which include geometrical and floral pattern, moulded brackets, moulded pendants etc. Tiles have been used mainly over the roof of windows.



## **Mariams's Tomb, Sikandara**

Mariam's Tomb is located on the left side of Agra-Mathura Road, to the west of Akbar's Tomb, Sikandara. The Tomb houses the mortal remains of Mariam Zamani, a Rajput Princess of Amber (Jaipur) and the wife of Emperor Akbar and mother of Jahangir (Salim). The structure was originally a pleasure pavilion under Sikander Lodi who built it in A.D. 1495. Additions and renovations were made in A. D. 1623 to this *baradari* and was converted into tomb. The ground floor consists of some forty chambers built by Sikander Lodi, which bear



faint traces of paintings on plastered walls. The centre of the ground floor houses the cenotaph of Mariam. The facades of the *baradari* had been veneered with red sandstone, which is cut into numerous panels and adorned with geometrical patterns carved in bas-relief. Each quoin of the structure is added with an ornamental octagonal tower. The tower is crowned by a pavilion supported by slender pillars. The upper storey contains the marble cenotaph, which is open to the sky.

## **Roman Catholic Cemetery, Agra**

This cemetery is situated on the eastern extension of the Mahatma Gandhi Road, near the Civil Court of



Agra. It is one of the ancient Christian cemeteries in Agra. The site of the cemetery is a part of the estate granted by Akbar to the Roman Catholic Mission. The cemetery contains tombs of different nationalities. Some are buried under simple tomb stones, while a few have respectable tomb buildings containing their mortal remains.

The most prominent tomb of a European at Agra is that of colonel John William Hessian. He was a native of Utrecht in Holland and was born in 1739. He served under the Nizam of Hyderabad and Marathas and died at Agra on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1803. The cemetery of John Hessian was



built by his sons and daughters. Its design was essentially borrowed from the Taj Mahal, but comparatively much smaller project on a much reduced scale. Instead of white marble it is finished in red sandstone. It has no inlay or mosaic decoration and the ornamentation is exclusively in carving on the exterior, in stylized floral designs. The tomb is

square on plan. Each façade has an *iwan* in the centre, flanked by ornamental double alcoves, one over the other. Slender turrets are attached to the central *iwan*-frame. The corners of the tomb are not chamfered. Instead, vertically fluted turrets surmounted by square *chhatris* are attached to them. The tomb is roofed by a double-dome, crowned by a magnificent finial. Popularly known as Red Taj Mahal because of its imitation of Taj in miniature scale, it is a perfectly balanced and beautiful building exemplifies the continuity of the architectural skills of Mughal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



The Tomb of General Perron, pyramidal in shape, lies to the north of Hessing's Tomb. The other important tombs are of Walter Reinhard (popular as Samru and specially remarkable as the husband of the famous Samru Begum of Sardhana), the great traveler Thieffan Thaler, John Midenhall (self-styled English ambassador to the Mughal Court) who died in 1614 A.D., Francis Corsi who died in 1635 A.D., Geronimo Veroneo (the so called architect of Taj) who died in 1640 A.D., Father Joseph de Castro who died in 1646 A.D., the famous artist Austion De Bodeaus and Francis Ellis who died in 1868 A.D .

### **Jaswant Singh-ki-Chhatri, Rajwara, Agra**

The *Chhatri* datable to A. D. 1677-1680 is situated on the right bank of Yamuna in village Rajwara in the vicinity of

Balkeshwar temple. The *Chhatri* contains the remains of Raja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur who served under Aurangzeb as one of the generals. The



*Chhatri*, made of sandstone is located on the platform with pillars carrying the flat roof. The space between the pillars is filled in with open latticework. The eastern wall has relief carvings.

### **Ram Bagh, Agra**

Ram Bagh is situated on the left bank of river Yamuna. The Ram Bagh is said to have been constructed



by Babur, as he mentions in his memoir. It is commonly believed that when Babur died in A.D. 1530 his mortal remains were first temporarily buried in this garden till



they were taken to the final resting place at Kabul. Its original name was Aram Bagh, which later

was corrupted into Ram Bagh under the Marathas, when they occupied Agra from A.D. 1775 to 1803. The first historical mention of this garden site as the Bagh-i-Nur-Afshan led some historians to think that this name had been derived from a garden (Bagh-i-Gul-Afshan or Nur-Afshan) in Kabul.

The garden is enclosed by high walls with corner towers crowned by pillared pavilions. Along the riverside, a high stone terrace, that stands between two double storeyed buildings. These structures underwent changes and alterations, first under Jahangir and later under the British. On the north-east side of this building, there exists another terrace, from which steps lead to a Hammam. The roof of the Hammam is vaulted.

Set on the river bank overlooking it gorgeously, it is a typical example of Mughal pleasure-garden. Water was drawn from the river and flowed into a network of broad canals, tanks and water-chutes (cascades) descending from one terrace to the other.

### **Chini-ka-Rauza, Agra**

The tomb of Mulla Shukrullah Shirazi, entitled "Afzal Khan Alami", who was the Wazir in the court of Emperor Shah Jahan, is popularly known as Chini-ka-Rauza for its



unique glazed tile decoration. It stands on the left bank of river Yamuna. Most probably, the tomb was constructed between A.D. 1630 and 1639 during the life time of the Wazir.

The mausoleum is square on plan surmounted by a bulbous dome of the Pathan



style. It has a spacious octagonal domed chamber in the centre in which there are two brick cenotaphs. The tomb is one of the best specimens of polychrome glazed tile decoration in India. The exterior of the building was once embellished with coloured glazed tiles with floral and geometrical designs. The central cenotaph hall has some painting and stucco works on its walls and ceiling.



The complex includes a well, situated at the northeast corner, and a tank, situated in front of south face of the mausoleum. A kiosk, located at the northwest corner is encased with red sandstone and crowned by a beautiful cupola.

### **Itimad-ud-Daula's Tomb, Agra**

The Itimad-ud-Daula's Tomb is situated on the left bank of river Yamuna next to Chini-ka-Rauza. Itimad-ud-Daula was the title given to Mirza Ghiyas Beg, father of Empress Nur Jahan who held the post of lord of treasures of the empire and later raised to the dignity of

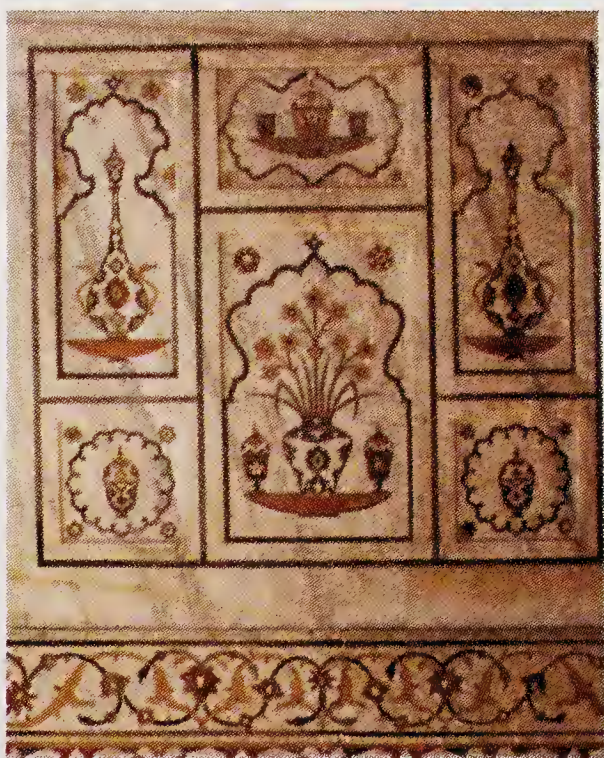


Wazir under Jahangir. Nur Jahan completed the construction of her father's Tomb in A. D. 1628 nearly



7 years after his death. The tomb is located at the centre of a Charbagh enclosed on all sides by high walls. The tomb is of white marble stones stand over a raised sand-

stone terrace. The building consists of a central hall, parallelogram in shape, which houses the tomb of the Wazir and his wife Asmat Begum. The hall is surrounded by small chambers in which the tombs of other family members including that of Nur Jahan's daughter Ladli Begum through her first husband Sher Afkun (popularly known as Sher Afghan) are located. A sandstone staircase leads to the first floor, where an elegant oblong dome is found surmounting a pavilion over the central hall, topped with two pinnacles. This pavilion, which has finely perforated marble screens on all sides, contains cenotaphs of plain marble but without any inscriptions. At the corners of the top of the building stand four round towers approximately measuring 40 feet in height, which are surmounted by marble kiosks.



The tomb of Itmad-ud-daulah is noted for profuse ornamentation in polychrome and mosaic pattern over its whole surface. *Guldasta*, rose-water vases, grapes, wine cups and flasks, Cyprus and other Persian motifs are freely employed in the scheme of ornamentation. The animal motifs have been depicted in painted designs mostly inside the jar shaped *guldastas*.



Interestingly human figures are also depicted in the scheme of painted panels.

The main entrance to the tomb is on the east side, while ornamental gateways have been constructed on north and south sides. The west side has in its middle a multi storeyed and multi roomed pavilion over hanging the river Yamuna. The shallow water channels, which originally took water from two tanks situated on the riversides, run all the sides of the garden and around the mausoleum.

### **Mehtab Bagh , Agra**

The garden complex situated on the left bank of Yamuna opposite to Taj Mahal, is known as Mehtab Bagh or “The moonlight garden”. Earlier only a part of the southern boundary wall and south-eastern burj was visible on surface. The archaeological excavations carried out by the department in the year 1996-1997, revealed a huge octagonal pool with 25 fountains, a small central tank, remains of an eastern



*baradari* and northern gateway. The heavily robbed boundary wall has also been traced on the north as well as eastern sides. The site is also associated with the myth of a black stone Taj Mahal but the excavations have provided ample evidence for a garden complex. This is also corroborated the letter of Aurangzeb, addressed to emperor





Shah Jahan stating the condition of this garden after a flood in A.D. 1652.

The Horticulture wing of Archaeological Survey of India has developed a typical Mughal garden of *Charbagh* pattern as revealed from the excavations. There are more than forty plant species which were grown in the Mughal gardens. The different species of tree, shrubs and ground cover such as *Azadirachta indica* (*Neem*), *Mimusops elengi* (*Molsari*), *Morus alba* (*Shehtoot*), *Psidium guava* (*Amrud*), *Eugenia jambolana* (*Jamun*), *Hibiscus* (*Gurhal*), citrus sps. (*Nimbu*), *Jatropha* (*Ratnajot*), TMC (*Chandni*), *Nerium odorum* (*Lal Kaner*), *Thevetia nerifolia* (*Peela Kaner*), *Centlam album* (*Chandan*), Lilies, Pomegranate (*Anar*), *Ashok* etc. have been planted. This garden has been developed to have a green belt in order to mitigate pollution around Taj Mahal.

### **Burhia-ka-Tal, Agra**

The village Burhia-ka-Tal is situated on the Agra-Tundla road at a distance of 23 km south-east of Agra.

The village proper has yielded Painted Grey Ware, Northern Black Polished Ware, besides Buddhist antiquities



and remains. The two-storeyed pavilion is located at the centre of a masonry tank. It was built in A.D. 1592 by Itimad Khan, an officer under emperor Akbar and also served Islam Shah Sur. The building is octagonal on plan. Another building at this site is the tomb of Itimad Khan and located on the northeast of the tank. It is a single storeyed building but identical with that in the centre of the tank.



## VISITOR'S INFORMATION

### Visiting Hours

Taj Mahal- 6.00 A.M. to 7 P.M. (Friday closed)

Other Monuments from Sunrise to Sunset.

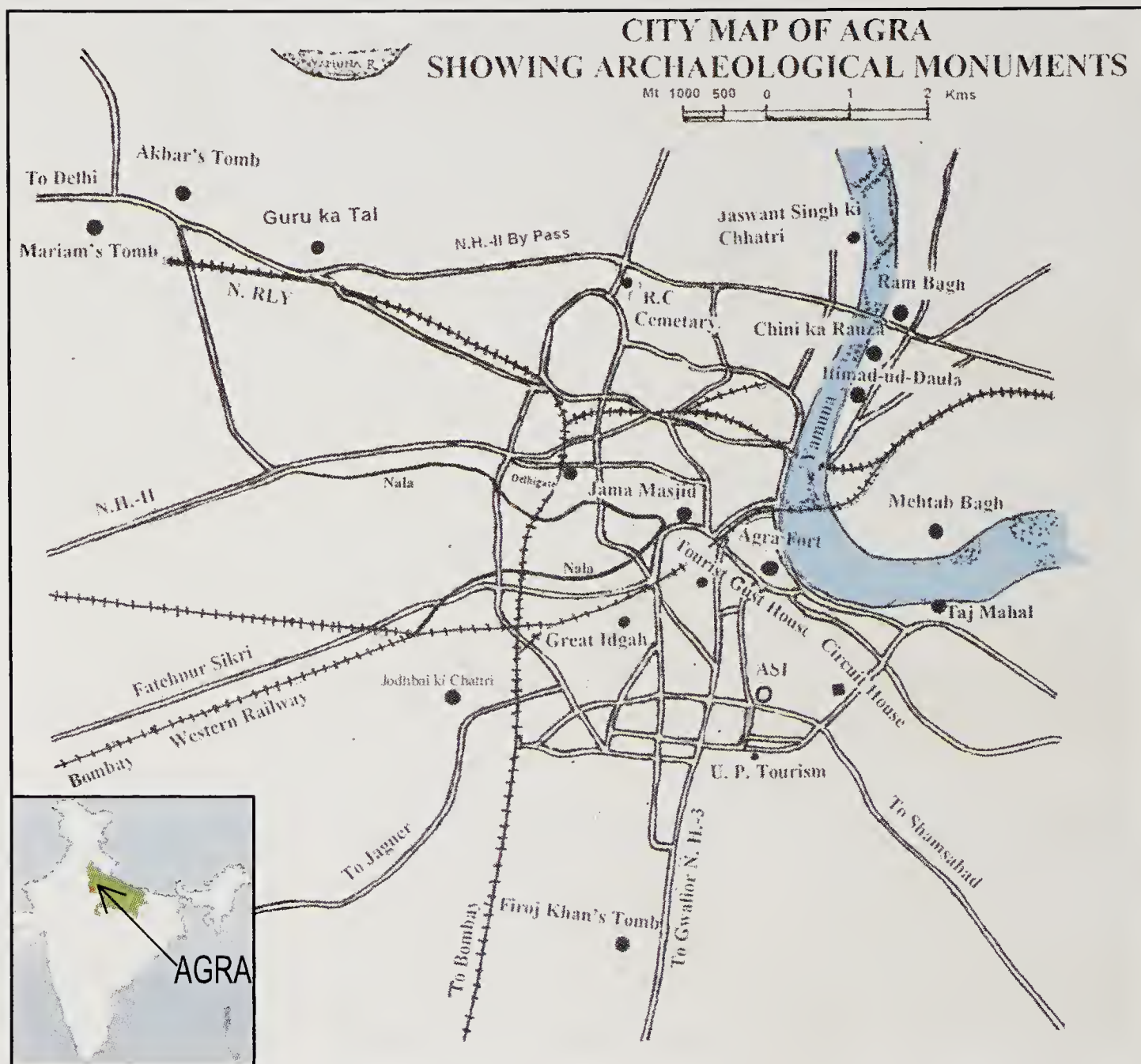
(free entry for children below the age of 15 years)

### Entry Fees of various monuments.

S. No.	Monuments	Entry Ticket for Domestic Tourist			Entry Ticket for Foreign Tourist		
		By A.S.I.	By A.D.A.	TOTAL	By A.S.I.	By A.D.A.	TOTAL
1.	Taj Mahal	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 20/-	US \$ 5 or Rs. 250/-	Rs. 500/-	Rs. 750/-
2.	Agra Fort	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 20/-	US \$ 5 or Rs. 250/-	Rs. 50/-	Rs. 300/-
3.	Fatehpur Sikri	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 20/-	US \$ 5 or Rs. 250/-	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 260/-
4.	Akbar's Tomb, Sikandara	Rs. 5/-	Rs. 5/-	Rs. 10/-	US \$ 2 or Rs. 100/-	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 110/-
5.	Mariyam's Tomb, Sikandara	Rs. 5/-	Nil	Rs. 5/-	US \$ 2 or Rs. 100/-	Nil	US \$ 2 or Rs. 100/-
6.	Ram Bagh	Rs. 5/-	Nil	Rs. 5/-	US \$ 2 or Rs. 100/-	Nil	US \$ 2 or Rs.100/-
7.	Itimad-ud-Daula	Rs. 5/-	Rs. 5/-	Rs. 10/-	US \$ 2 or Rs. 100/-	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 110/-
8.	Mehtab Bagh	Rs. 5/-	Nil	Rs. 5/-	US \$ 2 or Rs. 100/-	Nil	US \$ 2 or Rs.100/-
9.	Taj Museum, Taj Mahal	Rs. 5/-	Nil	Rs. 5/-	Rs. 5/-	Nil	Rs. 5/-

"REMEMBER- THE PRESENT GENERATION HAS A DUTY TO PRESERVE AND PASS ON SAFELY THE NATURAL & CULTURAL TREASURERS TO THE POSTERITY."





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by

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"LET US JOIN TOGETHER IN PRESERVING THIS HERITAGE TRUE  
 TO ITS HISTORICAL CONTENT AND DISTINCTION.  
 WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO MEDDLE WITH ITS CHARACTER AND  
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 AND HAND THEM DOWN TO THE FUTURE GENERATIONS."